

THE CONTROL OF CANCER.

Physicians should be more familiar with the excellent activities of the American Society for the Control of Cancer. The basic facts of the situation are of course, common knowledge among physicians. Cancer always starts as a purely local growth in which stage it is possible to remove and cure it. It is not a "blood disease." It is not contagious and probably not hereditary. It often causes no pain or localizing symptoms until well established. Complete and attentive examination is the obligation of the physician to every patient, more especially to that patient who may conceivably be the victim of cancer. Early consultation with a physician is the obligation of every individual who has any departure from normal physical and mental health, more especially in the years where cancer is more frequent. Statistics seem to indicate definitely that cancer is increasing, above the amount to be explained by increased accuracy of diagnosis and report.

Various agencies are available for the physician in his campaign against the spread of cancer. The chief is perhaps the education of the public in the importance of early careful diagnosis, and especially in the serious danger of cancer quacks, such as Chamlee, for instance, who was discussed a few months ago, and of advertised cures and treatments. With the diagnosis certain, no cure is safe which does not comprehend the immediate and complete ablation of the cancerous tissue. Such public education is being directed by the American Society for the Control of Cancer, and should be encouraged by the medical profession, individually and through its various organizations. It includes personal instruction by the physician, newspaper and magazine publicity, and public lectures by qualified speakers. These latter can secure the syllabus of a lecture entitled, "The Control of Cancer," from the American Society, and also the use of lantern slides.

Another important agency is exercised by the nurses of the country, especially those engaged in public health work. Their advice is not infrequently of great weight with the public. Instruction in the early recognition of cancer should be given in all schools of nursing, so that the danger signs may be recognized by the nurse and the victim promptly referred to competent medical attention. The various women's clubs and organizations may become a valuable agency in this propaganda if they will do so. Local physicians could well bring this matter to the attention of the proper persons to secure such publicity.

The practicing physician does not need to be conversant with all the details of cancer research, constructive and interesting as these are. He does need to recognize the importance of early diagnosis and adequate treatment, if the death rate from cancer is to be reduced. He will find some or all of the agencies mentioned, available for his use in this connection.

INSURANCE AND THE INDEMNITY DEFENSE FUND.

We have been greatly surprised to learn that some of our members are under the present impression that the Council and Legal Department of the society have recommended to the members that their insurance be dropped upon joining the Indemnity Defense Fund.

This is erroneous. Neither the Council nor the Legal Department has at any time advocated such a course. On the contrary our Legal Department has at all times cautioned members who were carrying insurance to continue the insurance and has recommended that they join the Fund as well, but as to all members who had no insurance, the recommendation has been that they join the Fund.

The officers and representatives of the society have not been able to bring the advantages and benefits of membership in the Fund sufficiently to the attention of all of our members as yet, and the membership therein is not nearly as large as it will be when these facts are clearly before the personnel of our organization. For this reason, and because our advisors desire to secure more complete records of our experience, and by reason furthermore of the increasing tendency to assert malpractice claims, our officers and legal department have held to the course outlined above.

Therefore, as we have heretofore said, and we thought with sufficient plainness, and which we here repeat, the society does not advise any member to cancel or give up his insurance upon becoming a member of the Fund, but on the contrary, to continue his insurance and to join the Fund as well.

In addition to the many advantages of membership in the Fund which we have heretofore pointed out in these columns, we direct special attention to the resolution adopted at the meeting of the Council held at Los Angeles November 24, 1917, regarding Medical Defense Rule No. VI, which rule heretofore provided that if a member had insurance covering malpractice claims or suits, he must elect whether the society or the insurance company shall undertake his legal defense. The modification made by resolution at the recent Council meeting, abrogates the rule in cases of Contributing Members. Therefore a member who has insurance and who has joined the Fund does not, in cases covered by both his insurance and his membership in the Fund, have to elect regarding the conduct of his defense. His defense will be undertaken and conducted jointly by the insurance company and the society. The benefit of this course to such members is, we believe, so obvious that we will not comment further about it.

OBSESSIONS OF THE NORMAL MIND.

It is a truism that the frontier of normal psychology merges easily with the abnormal. Many mental traits which do not appear prominently in a well-balanced mind become pathological by exaggeration alone. If we are to accept Freud's explanation, it would appear that lines of mental activity which are uncomfortable, or unpleasant,